REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-11, 13-25, and 27-31 are pending in the present application. By this amendment, claims 1, 11, 17, 27, and 30-31 are amended, and claim 26 is canceled without prejudice. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

I. Formal Matters

Interview Summary Under 37 C.F.R. §1.133

A telephonic interview occurred between the undersigned and Examiner Beth Van Doren on August 12, 2004. The interview covered the rejection of independent claims 1, 11, 17, 30, and 31 as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 5,920,846 to Storch et al. (hereinafter "Storch"). Examiner Beth Van Doren and the undersigned discussed the cited reference and considered proposed amendments to overcome the rejection. Although Examiner Beth Van Doren and the undersigned did not agree on an exact amendment to overcome the rejection, Examiner Beth Van Doren agreed with the undersigned that an amendment regarding the sequence of processing a service order as recited by the present application would likely overcome the rejection.

II. Claim Rejections

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Over Storch

Claims 1-7, 9-11, and 13-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Storch. As noted above, claim 26 is canceled without prejudice rendering the rejection to this claim moot. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A. Claims 1, 2-7, 9, 10, and 21-23 are allowable.

As amended, claim 1 recites that a method for eliminating an unnecessary dispatch of a service technician comprises determining whether the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician; if the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician, then generating a dispatch order for the dispatch and placing the dispatch order in a queue for execution; if the service order requires a dispatch of a service

technician, then determining whether the service order meets a set of predefined criteria that indicates the service order is likely to cause an unnecessary dispatch; if the service order meets the set of predefined criteria, then determining whether the dispatch is unnecessary; if the dispatch is unnecessary, then determining whether the dispatch associated with the dispatch order in the queue is scheduled to occur within a predetermined time period; and if the dispatch is scheduled to occur within the predetermined time period, then placing the dispatch order in the queue on hold and canceling the dispatch associated with the service order.

Storch fails to teach or suggest a method for eliminating an unnecessary dispatch of a service technician as recited in claim 1. On the contrary, Storch describes an integrated method for processing a service request for installation, maintenance, or repair by sending a Tier 1 distribution of a service order to a Work Force Administration/Dispatch Out (WFA/DO) system, which assigns a preliminary factor price indicating an estimated time to complete the order if technician dispatch is required based upon the class of service. After needed facility assignments are assigned, the service order is again sent to the WFA/DO system during a Tier 2 distribution, and the WFA/DO system examines the service order and determines a final time estimate for work to be performed by a technician to activate the requested service. Storch describes that a final time estimate greater than zero indicates that dispatch of an outside technician is needed to complete the service request. A final time estimate that equals zero indicates that no field work is needed to be performed by the outside technician. After a final time estimate is assigned, Storch describes that the WFA/DO system is triggered to send the final time estimate to a Due Date Availability System (DUDAS). When the DUDAS receives information indicating the final time estimate for the service order, the DUDAS sends notification to a Service Order Retrieval and Distribution (SORD) system indicating availability of appointments, and the SORD system passes the information to a computer order entry system where an order taker person is able to schedule an appointment.

This description of Storch is not analogous to the method recited by claim 1 because unlike claim 1 which recites that a dispatch order is generated and placed in a queue for execution when a determination is made that a service order requires a

dispatch, Storch fails to teach or suggest scheduling an appointment for dispatch of an outside technician after determining a preliminary time estimate for the service order but prior to determining the final time estimate for the service order. Instead, Storch describes scheduling a dispatch of an outside technician after the WFA/DO system assigns a preliminary time estimate for the work associated with a service order and after the WFA/DO system reexamines the service order and determines a final time estimate for the work.

Moreover, Storch fails to teach or suggest determining whether a dispatch is scheduled to occur within a predetermined time period if a final time estimate of zero is assigned to the service order, and if the dispatch is scheduled to occur within the predetermined time period, then placing the dispatch on hold. Instead, Storch describes that an appointment for the dispatch of an outside technician is not scheduled until a final time estimate is assigned to the service order.

For at least the reasons given above, claim 1 is allowable over Storch. Claims 2-7, 9-10, and 21-23 depend from claim 1 and are considered allowable over Storch for at least these reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

B. Claims 11, 13-16, 24, 25, and 27 are allowable.

As amended, claim 11 recites that a system for eliminating unnecessary dispatches comprises a work management center for receiving the service order from the service order control system, for determining whether the service order requires a dispatch, and if so, for generating a dispatch order corresponding to the service order for the dispatch; and a trap service order system for receiving a duplicate of the service order from the service control system, determining whether the service order requires a dispatch, and if so, determining whether the service order meets a set of predefined criteria that indicates the service order is likely to cause an unnecessary dispatch, and if so, then further examining the service order to determine whether the dispatch is unnecessary, and if the dispatch is unnecessary, then determining whether the dispatch is scheduled to occur within a predetermined time period, and if so, then communicating with the work management center to place the dispatch order on hold.

Storch does not teach or suggest a system for eliminating unnecessary dispatches as recited by claim 11. In contrast, Storch describes a system for processing a service order including a WFA/DO system, a DUDAS, a SORD system, and a computer order entry system. During a Tier 1 distribution of the service order, the WFA/DO system assigns the service order a preliminary factor price indicating an estimated time to complete the order if technician dispatch is required, and during a Tier 2 distribution, the WFA/DO system is again sent the service order to determine a final time estimate for work to be performed by a technician to activate the requested service. After a final time estimate is assigned, Storch describes that the WFA/DO system is triggered to send the final time estimate to the DUDAS, which then sends notification to the SORD system indicating availability of appointments. The SORD system passes the information to a computer order entry system where an order taker person is able to schedule an appointment.

This description of Storch is not analogous to the system recited by claim 11 because Storch fails to teach or suggest that after determining a preliminary factor price requiring dispatch of a technician, the WFA/DO system generates a dispatch order for the dispatch, and after determining a final time estimate indicating that a dispatch is not required, the WFA/DO system determines that the dispatch order is scheduled to occur within a predetermined amount of time and places the dispatch order on hold. Instead, Storch describes that the computer order entry system does not schedule a dispatch of a technician until the WFA/DO system has determined a preliminary factor price and a final time estimate. Once the computer order entry system schedules the dispatch, Storch fails to teach or suggest that the WFA/DO system determines if the dispatch is unnecessary and scheduled to occur within a predetermined amount of time, and if so, then the WFA/DO system places the scheduled dispatch on hold.

For at least the reasons given above, claim 11 is allowable over Storch. Claims 13-16, 24-25, and 27 depend from claim 11 and are considered allowable over Storch for at least these reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

C. Claims 17 to 20, 28, and 29 are allowable.

As amended, claim 17 recites that a method for eliminating an unnecessary dispatch of a service technician comprises receiving a service order including facilities assignments for the service order; determining whether the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician; if the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician, then determining whether the service order meets a set of predefined criteria that indicates a likelihood of an unnecessary dispatch by examining selected sections of the service order; if the service order meets the set of predefined criteria, then determining whether the dispatch is unnecessary; and if the dispatch is unnecessary, then eliminating the dispatch by correcting the service order.

Storch does not teach or suggest a method for eliminating an unnecessary dispatch of a service technician as recited by claim 17. On the contrary, Storch describes an integrated method for processing a service request for installation, maintenance, or repair by sending a Tier 1 distribution of a service order to the WFA/DO system, which assigns a preliminary factor price indicating an estimated time to complete the order if technician dispatch is required based upon the class of service. Storch describes that Tier 1 distribution is the initial general transmission of information relating to the service order to all computer systems *before* any facility assignments are performed. After needed facility assignments are assigned, the service order is again sent to the WFA/DO system during a Tier 2 distribution at which time the WFA/DO system examines the service order and determines a final time estimate for work to be performed by a technician to activate the requested service. Storch describes that a final time estimate greater than zero indicates that dispatch of an outside technician is needed to complete the service request, and a final time estimate that equals zero indicates that dispatch of an outside technician is unnecessary.

This description of Storch is not analogous to the method recited by claim 17 because Storch fails to teach or suggest that the service order includes facility assignments before the WFA/DO system determines the preliminary factor price for the service order. Instead, Storch describes that facility assignments are made after the preliminary factor price is assigned and before the WFA/DO system determines the final time estimate, which indicates if a dispatch of an outside technician is necessary.

For at least the reasons given above, claim 17 is allowable over Storch. Claims 18-20 and 28-29 depend from claim 17 and are considered allowable over Storch for at least these reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

D. Claim 30 is allowable.

As amended, claim 30 recites that a method for eliminating an unnecessary dispatch of a service technician comprises receiving a service order at a work management center; determining, at the work management center, whether the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician; if the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician, then generating a dispatch order corresponding to the service order for the dispatch and placing the dispatch in a queue for execution; receiving a duplicate of the service order at a trap service order system; determining, at the trap service order system, whether the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician; if the service order requires a dispatch of a service technician, then determining, at the trap service order system, whether the service order meets a set of predefined criteria that indicates a likelihood of an unnecessary dispatch by examining selected sections of the service order; if the service order meets the set of predefined criteria, then determining, at the trap service order system, whether the dispatch is unnecessary; if the dispatch is unnecessary, then determining, at the trap service order system, whether the dispatch associated with the service order is scheduled to occur within a predetermined time period; if the dispatch is scheduled to occur within the predetermined time period, then placing the dispatch order in the queue on hold.

Storch does not teach or suggest a method for eliminating an unnecessary dispatch of a service technician as recited by claim 30. In contrast, Storch describes an integrated method for processing a service request by sending a Tier 1 distribution of a service order to a WFA/DO system, which assigns a preliminary factor price indicating an estimated time to complete the service order if technician dispatch is required based upon the class of service. After needed facility assignments are assigned, the service order is again sent to the WFA/DO system during a Tier 2 distribution at which time the WFA/DO system examines the service order and determines a final time estimate for work to be performed by a technician to activate the requested service. Storch describes that a final time

estimate greater than zero indicates that dispatch of an outside technician is needed to complete the service request, and a final time estimate that equals zero indicates that dispatch of an outside technician is unnecessary. After a final time estimate is assigned, Storch describes that the WFA/DO system is triggered to send the final time estimate to a DUDAS. When the DUDAS receives information indicating the final time estimate for the service order, the DUDAS sends notification to a SORD system indicating availability of appointments, and the SORD system passes the information to a computer order entry system where an order taker person is able to schedule an appointment.

This description of Storch is not analogous to the method recited by claim 30 because unlike claim 30 which recites that a dispatch order is generated and placed in a queue for execution when a determination is made that a service order requires a dispatch, Storch fails to teach or suggest scheduling an appointment for dispatch of an outside technician after determining a preliminary time estimate for the service order but prior to determining the final time estimate for the service order. Instead, Storch describes scheduling a dispatch of an outside technician after the WFA/DO system assigns a preliminary time estimate for the work associated with a service order and after the WFA/DO system reexamines the service order and determines a final time estimate for the work.

Moreover, Storch fails to teach or suggest determining whether a dispatch is scheduled to occur within a predetermined time period if a final time estimate of zero is assigned to the service order, and if the dispatch is scheduled to occur within the predetermined time period, then placing the dispatch on hold. Instead, Storch describes that an appointment for the dispatch of an outside technician is not scheduled until a final time estimate is assigned to the service order.

For at least the reasons given above, claim 30 is allowable over Storch. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

E. Claim 31 is allowable.

As amended, claim 31 recites that a system for eliminating unnecessary dispatches comprises a work management center for receiving a service order from a service order control system, determining whether the service order requires a dispatch,

and if so, then generating a dispatch order; and a trap service order system for receiving a duplicate of the service order from the service control system, determining whether the service order requires a dispatch, and if so, then further examining the service order to determine whether the dispatch is unnecessary, and if the dispatch is unnecessary, then determining whether the dispatch is scheduled to occur within a predetermined time period, and if so, then communicating with the work management center to place the dispatch order on hold.

Storch does not teach or suggest a system for eliminating unnecessary dispatches as recited by claim 31. In contrast, Storch describes a system for processing a service order including a WFA/DO system which, during a Tier 1 distribution of the service order, assigns the service order a preliminary factor price indicating an estimated time to complete the order if technician dispatch is required. During a Tier 2 distribution, the WFA/DO system is again sent the service order to determine a final time estimate for work to be performed by a technician to activate the requested service. After a final time estimate is assigned, Storch describes that the WFA/DO system is triggered to send the final time estimate to a DUDAS, which then sends notification to a SORD system indicating availability of appointments. The SORD system passes the information to a computer order entry system where an order taker person is able to schedule an appointment.

This description of Storch is not analogous to the system recited by claim 31 because Storch fails to teach or suggest that after determining a preliminary factor price requiring dispatch of a technician, the WFA/DO system generates a dispatch order for the dispatch, and after determining a final time estimate indicating that a dispatch is not required, the WFA/DO system determines that the dispatch order is scheduled to occur within a predetermined amount of time and places the dispatch order on hold. Instead, Storch describes that the computer order entry system does not schedule a dispatch of a technician until the WFA/DO system has determined a preliminary factor price and a final time estimate. Once the computer order entry system schedules the dispatch, Storch fails to teach or suggest that the WFA/DO system determines if the dispatch is unnecessary and scheduled to occur within a predetermined amount of time, and if so, then the WFA/DO system places the scheduled dispatch on hold.

For at least the reasons given above, claim 31 is allowable over Storch. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For at least these reasons, Applicants assert that the pending claims 1-7, 9-11, 13-25, and 27-31 are in condition for allowance. Applicants further assert that this response addresses each and every point of the Office Action, and respectfully requests that the Examiner pass this application with claims 1-7, 9-11, 13-25, and 27-31 to allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at 404.954.5042.

Respectfully submitted,

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